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Country Church Young



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FREEDOM

F R E E D O M

POEMS

BY

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG

AUTHOR OF "WIND AND HILL"

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1914

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TO
GEORGE MACAULAY TREVELYAN

Where he from whom you take your name,
whose mantle upon you descends,—
where he whose heritage of fame
my name and thought their meaning lends,
were rivals in the friendly game ;—
where later our two fathers came,
met, and were friends ;—
where we, in turn, grew glad to meet,
the trinity of friends complete :—
For Trinity, whose height first brought
the breadth of vision to our thought ;
whose love of freedom bade us look
beyond the hedge-row and the book ;
who gave, the most three years could give,
the wish to know, the strength to live,
and crowned her gift with blessings three,
good work, good friends, good liberty ;—
for Trinity, will you, the best
she brought, take tribute for the rest ;—
one breath from that strong wind of truth
that filled our lungs in comrade youth.

G. W. Y.

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RUNNING SANDS

Open the door :

'Tis but the lift upon the pin that rattles ;
this night no neighbour battles
through the wild gusts that race along the shore.

Draw back the catch :

That is no seaman hailing ;
the riders of the surf are wake and wailing
my midnight summons at the quivering latch.

Fling wide the pane :

I see no phantom, shadow-white and dancing ;—
or but the candle glancing
slant-wise upon the shallows of the rain.

That was no tread ;
the shuffle and harsh running of the dunes.
Old wrecks stir with new moons,
and bones upon the shore are never dead.

Throw the door wide :
So many years I've heard the wind-boys singing ;
maybe to-night they're bringing
my man upon the onrush of the tide.

Loosen the blind :
He loved the breakers and the seabirds crying ;
he'll join me, when I'm dying,
for all the startled sobbing of the wind.

I know my man ;
he's not kept port while I've gone down the weather :
white withered heads together,
one ebb shall leave us where one flood began.

Those are my waves ;
they've sung a long long honour for his sleeping :
I'll not go creeping
to hide alone among the shrinking graves.

I'll have no turf
choke this old dust with flowers ;
but rock beside him where the deep race scours
one rest below the thunder of the surf.

The seaweed strips
have fared between us, lover-lengths of greeting,—
us two, alone, unmeeting,
watching the same broad sky, the same bright ships.

The tides of years
have rolled me message of his love unresting ;—
their white torn cresting
flung back for him the tumult of my tears.

Storm and rough rain
have washed my wrinkles deep, my grey hair sodden ;
the path that I have trodden
along the sea-cliff has been all my gain.

So many suns have risen,
burning the sea-rim of my ceaseless march ;
and stooped their evening arch
ere I turned home tenderly o'er his prison.

So many suns have set,
drawing my heart across the same wide sea ;
he seemed most near to me
where in the dusk the lengthening shadows met.

Has the ebb come ?
I hear the peace-rock speaking ;
and voices on the bar, and cordage creaking,
the ringing of an anchor sheeted home.

Fling wide the door :

He shall not leave me lonely.

For us there is no death, nor darkness ; only
one tide of rest returning from the shore.

The storm is past.

The nearer waves are full of stars, and falling.

I hear the shore-wind calling.

The sands of life drift seaward at the last.

THE SLEEPERS

The Alps grow heavy with sleep : the autumn song
from stream and waterfall,
that murmured summer memories all day long
through shadow-laden pastures, the last call
of glacier torrents prisoned on the height,
grow hour by hour more still.

Each following noon
our feet ring louder on the fettered hill ;
each following night
the fir-trees move with fainter harmonies ;
till the last echo dies,
and silence meets the moment of the moon.

Winter, and silence on the Alps ; a pall
muffled on gorge and steep :
only the tremor of the far snow fall
slipping from arms grown languid in their sleep.
Let him who seeks the monarchs of our quest
challenge their wakened might,
his diadem
wrested from summits crowned with summer light :
not his to tempt their rest
when winter rigours and cold snows encumber :—
the sleeping ones have but to stir in slumber,
and he shall sleep with them.

HIGH HILLS

There is much comfort in high hills,
and a great easing of the heart.
We look upon them, and our nature fills
with loftier images from their life apart.
They set our feet on curves of freedom, bent
to snap the circles of our discontent.

Mountains are moods ; of larger rhythm and line,
moving between the eternal mode and mine.
Moments in thought, of which I too am part,
I lose in them my instant of brief ills.—
There is great easing of the heart,
and cumulance of comfort on high hills.

PLASH LANE

Plash Lane is round the corner ; every day
I go to school that way.
Such a long lane ; but shorter coming back,
with big brown puddles in each deep wheel track.
I wake, you see, at dawn,
when the sun glows under the yellow eaves,
waking the birds behind the window leaves :
they're lighter sleepers
than me, and chirp among the jasmine creepers
before they sing to breakfast on the lawn :
and yet folks say I chatter !
If you're a bird,
it doesn't seem to matter
that you are never seen before you're heard !

I'm very sleepy till I've had my bath
down in the lily-brook :
and always when it's cold
I hear the aggravating elm-tree rook,
who's very cross and old,
hopping behind me down the garden path
and croaking ' coward, coward,' with such airs
as if he liked the dew in his own nest !
he never dares
to wait till I am racing up and dressed,
but makes a sort of flop
upward, and flaps me by,
till I must stop
and throw the towel at his wicked eye !

Plash Lane is through the orchard. You must stalk
when you're an Indian, all down Mossy walk
and through the currants to the corner bed,
where flaming pokers clash over your head
and sunflowers hide the sun ;
or, if you are an engine, you can run

down the two lines of box
past the red signals of the hollyhocks
to puff against the stile.
The jungle orchard takes a long, long while ;
you cross it on your knees
where all the grass is dark,
with lumps of amber gum on the grey bark
and magic twisted trees :
suddenly, just beyond,
you slide into Plash Lane,
with puddles after rain
as big as the Pacific, or our pond.

On the left hedge there stands the Blackthorn Knight,
clattering haughtily at each windy gust
and prickly armed for fight ;
all winter time he leans to thrust
his lances at the postman, or to spear
the milking cattle if they lumber near.
But in the summer he's a princely sight,
with cloak of peace and a great white plume to toss ;

he bows and kisses finger-tips across
to the Laburnum Lady opposite :
she's veiled and shy in May
and shivers when he bows ;
but oh, in June she knows,
and cries in golden tears her pride away.

At the Long pool you can't get round the edge,
where shadow-grass trails sleepily from the hedge
and sorrel shakes its head
to know if it is really green or red ;
you crawl along the cart-wheel ridge, that crumbles
in frothy towers, while your satchel tumbles
clumsy from side to side,
toppling the brave Horatius in his stride
plump into foaming Tiber. When you've crossed
comes Wailing Wood, with robins crackling leaves
to bury lots of Babies : who get lost
but never die when I
am story-teller ; for Pied Piper comes—
(that's me)—with herds of beeves,

and gives them such a feed
with malmsey-wine and mead !
and flutes them happily
and ever afterwards to their long-lost homes.

At Cross-ways I can hear old Carrier's hoof
changing along the lane, klip—klip—klop—kloof,
with klush—klush—in the splash parts. Where the
spring
bubbles out of the barrel, round footprints
(but not our sheep) make mud-rims on the flints ;
for here the wild Moss-troopers, woundy and harsh,
hoot like horned owls and gallop through the marsh,
with pikes and rusty helms
lustily brandishing,
to vanish cunningly underneath the elms.
I rather like moss-troopers, they play fair
and never haunt ;
they ambush just for fun :
but past the gravel pit I always run,
for that is Merlin's lair !

he's hidden in the hollow inky roots
of the old thorns, knotted and wet and gaunt,
and full of grammarie ;—
and shakes the boughs, and shoots
a drip of awful spells,
till hemlock and harebells
shiver with terror as I tiptoe by.

Plash Lane has got a quiet open end
over Goose Common, close beside the school,—
mostly at half-past eight,—
sometimes a little late
if the bell isn't ringing at the bend
where the turf track
runs round the corner to Forbidden Pool.
It's a man's duty, if he hears the quack
of sacred ducks, to hurry to defend
the Capitol, with slatey stuff that skips !
and if he's good at building paper ships—
and at forgetting,—
he must embark, even at nine, to break

the power of the invader :
 though Francis—that's the drake—
 (they won't believe !) is really half the worry ;
 he's got a fussy habit of upsetting
 the British fleet as well as the Armada ;
 and half my notebook's scattered
 before they're really battered
 and wrecked upon the reeds at Tobermory

It isn't only in dreams
 that things can be both long and short : it seems
 a long way down Plash Lane ;
 but when I'm free, and tearing home again,
 it roars past like a railway-window :—rush—
 the woods are passed, with never a brigand or brush !
 splash—through the puddles !—spatter—on and out !
 no wait for drawbridge, just a passing shout
 for disappointed wizards !—wild plum and cherry
 whirl in a blurr !—even the magic berry
 of spindlewood, Queen Mab's own pink coach wheel,
 rolls backward much too fast

for any passing Puck to stop and steal
the lucky linch-pin.—Faster on, and past
the leaning Knight and the Laburnum Lady,
still armed and still in tears :—
so through the garden gate
and lavender,—with just a little wait
to tease old 'Tim, who doesn't like his ears
turned inside out ;—then, where it's grass and shady
under the cedar-tree,
a proper picnic tea,
with just Mother
who always understands,
and doesn't bother
with “Child, where *is* your hat ?” and “*Oh*, what
hands !”

FOR ANY BOY

I wish for him
strength ; that he may be strong in every limb,
stubborn and fearless, with no cover to thank,
fighting for men with men in the front rank.

I wish him kind ;
that he may have the weak always in mind :
such kindness as first treads the path of fear,
not tendance on the wounded in the rear.

I'd have him grow
deep-breathed, deep-hearted, cherished of wind and
snow ;
loving delightful laughter, and harsh thrills
in summer rivers and on perilous hills.

I wish him sight ;
that he may read the world's real beauties right :
and for himself, wit and a laughing heart,
lest he may rage to bear so small a part.

I wish him thought ;
that he may fashion faith even to a nought,
rather than take another's creed on trust,
and pass a fool and profitless to dust.

I'd have him range
a rebel, loving change only for change ;
till he can forge a yoke for his broad back
and drag his kind one step up some new track.

Let him know men,
and have all acts, all passions in his ken :
they win no wars who peep on life askance
and shoot wise saws from sheltered ignorance.

Let him be flame,
quenchless and vital, in all winds the same ;
fuse soul and body, and refine through years
judgment from passion, joy from his burning tears.

So let him live :
love work, love rest, love all that life can give ;
and when he grows too weary to feel joy,
leave life, with laughter, to some other boy.

THE ALMOND TREES

Sunlight, and in spring :
and little else matters :
light and song, children of kindly heat,
of sunshine from cool snows.
The wind sings, and scatters
messages from the sun about my feet,
light and the song of spring,
leaf of the almond-blossom and early rose.

If I but bend,
I hold the messages that light may bring,
children of sunshine, of the sun my friend,
leaf of the almond-blossom and early rose,
each with one thought of spring :

and if I will,
I breathe upon them all I know of light
and song, and lift them to the sun to scatter
where the wind blows
singing among the cypresses: no matter
if no one read them ;
I hold them but to write
the message of the sunlight that they bring :
ere the spring close
let them pass from the hill,
one moment held, light and the song of spring ;
the sun will heed them,
leaf of the almond-blossom and early rose
still.

FROM THE MOUNTAIN

What does the world think? What my sense shall
make it :

there is no world but what is in my mind ;
it has no truth, but as I choose to take it ;
it cannot hurt, if but I call it kind :

I am alone, and all the shapes of earth
are empty—till I bring their life to birth.

The winds live not : I listen, and they sing to me ;
motionless hills are gods with whom I walk ;
sunshine and night have souls, for what they bring
to me ;

children are all the joy I hear them talk.

The earth is full of echoes ; that can give
life to my heart,—if I but let them live.

Men cannot move me, for their much repeating
a pettiness of shape they share with mine ;
shades of my semblance, shattered in their meeting
with deeper shadows on my heart's design :

I only live ; and all mankind is naught,
but as I lend it being in my thought.

Through this blue dusk the soulless stars are wheeling
to meet the soulless lights from the blue plain ;
one lamp for every nest of mortals stealing
back to their nothingness of life again.

In the wide spaces of this lonely night
candle and star live only in my sight.

WAVES IN THE CREEK

A green sea,
and a hot sun,
and a shelving passage of fairy shells,
exquisite, silvery, soft to the feet,
a silver alley that winds and falls
between granite walls
twelve feet apart and twelve feet high,
facing a quivering corn-blue sky
and the green of Cornish seas.

Up and along the fall of shells
swaying, sinking, heavy with ease,
the slow surf swells
lazily, with a listless beat,
crystal green in the August heat :
And O the fun, the heaven of fun !—

to spring to the alley, and strip, and run
down the fall of shells with a swinging leap
head first, breast deep,
to the heart of the wave as it surges in ;
to feel the cold on the sunburned skin,
of the ice-green sea
on the warm brown sun !

A light of the opening walls, and a shout,
as we stand on the low red rocks without,
while a weight of water idly lifting
hovers cold round firm-braced hips,
and noonday drifting
breathes in salt sweet air on the lips.

On either side
the past pools of the tide
burn for their hour of peace and summer shining ;
where rose anemone
stars the green of the sea,
and tranquil shadows tell the tongue-weeds' twining.

A chill of fire from the sea,
and a flame of life from the sun,
and behind a flash of vivid forms that run
down the red sloping boulders ;
wave-kindled and alive,
only intent to dive
and fling quick furrows from their thrusting shoulders.

The lines of moving shapes
laughing in sunlight and all golden brown
shatter the unchanging frown
scarred on the forehead of the fronting capes.

Once more, and yet once more,
the swift feet spurn the silver of the fall,
the silver crescents flash across the crest
plunging for chill delight ;
the gulls wheel from the shore
with crescent wings at rest,
their startled call
mocking the shortness of our silver flight.

So when at last we lie,
by the green waves,
under a hot sky,
drowsy, and flung to rest upon the sands,
dreaming, and glad, and browning finely,
the far cold of the sea
sings for us restfully,
and the cool ripples race to kiss our hands
divinely.

BRANDON BAY

The wild white seabirds of Brandon
from the fall of the cliffs to the caves
stoop on the watch
as they cry their wish
with a swoop for the catch
of the shoaling fish
from the sullen plunge of the waves.
On the brow of Brandon is mist, and rest
from the racing sky :—
the rollers break upon Brandon,
Brandon the blessed,
and the seagulls cry.

The peat-brown children of Brandon
in the gusts of the wet grey sand
with still eyes glance
under rain-roughed hair
and their brown bodies dance
wind-tattered and bare
where the spray drives bleak on the land.

At the base of Brandon is hollow, and nest
under rainy sky :—
and the children scatter on Brandon,
Brandon the blessed,
with a shrill sea cry.

The broad-browed fishers of Brandon,
torn sails dipped to the foam,
bid life bold
for a crust hard won ;
till they spy red gold
in the Western sun,
and hunger waits them at home.
The brood of Brandon flits to the west
as the seabirds fly :—
and there's only old men in Brandon,
only children on Brandon,
Brandon the blessed,
as the years go by.

STONE CHAT

Out of the mist,
little friend, little mate,
the wet white mist on the wet flat stone,
with the rain around you,
you frisk with a flirt
of your brisk little wing
and a pert
little twist of your beak to sing ;—
—cheek !—cheek !—
a perk, and a hop
to my bleak wet stone ;
—found you !—found you—
out of the mist on the flat hill-top
in the wind, and alone.

What a warm black strap
for a warm orange coat !
and your throat—
chack, chack—
what a note—what a note !
the sharp wet snap of a pebble on slate :

little friend, mayhap—
—chack !—he is gone :
but again, from a stone,
from a wet stone, flat stone,
—chat !—chat !—

THAT

is the chirp of my mate,
the stone-chat, stone-chat,
out in the mist,
out in the mist and the rain,
happy alone,
the jolly little chap.

THE LAZY GIPSY

Movement of the birth of the morning
very cold upon his crisp hair,
rouse him shivering as he turns,
the little rogue gipsy, lying there
 cuddling in the dew and the mist ;
under the thorn,
under the thorn and bramble, clutching the ferns
 in his freckled fist !

Waken him with wind-reed and merriment,
bracken frond and tree twig a-toss ;
water-well chuckle for the imp,
rogue Pan curled among the moss,
 hugging his pipe for his fun ;
pelt him with berries,
pelt him with berry and leaf, till his brown toes crimp
 to dance with the sun !

READY TEARS

Pitiful charity of rain,
indefinite comfort from blue skies
blind with their own bright tears,
flooding in fashion
of importunate kindness
the labour of sunlight on the plain,
the red grain ripening in the ear ;—
what has your mercy done,
rusting on the ploughshare of the sun ?

Easy sorrow from the eyes
of children of sunnier height,
pouring the blindness
of cloudier compassion
to darken less fortunate night ;—
leave us to merciless light !
the sun ploughs in furrows of pain :
shall rain clouds choke them of their grain ?

THE SINGER FROM THE HILLS

‘Hear me, and sing to me,

for I am singing.

Sing to me, birds, that nest in evening throng.

Hear me, singing to me ;

I am the summer song

within your breast, the song beneath your wing.

Sing with me, bringing to me

the music of wings gliding.

Sunlight is quivering song above the summer wings

of birds that sing

where I am biding.’

Orpheus comes from the mountain, singing ;

sunlight lingers ;

all the winds sing round his feet :

at his coming
 mountains sink and cluster to him ;
 bees and humming-birds make sweet
 the April blossoms that pursue him ;
 summer forests sway to meet him ;
 streamlets leap to touch his fingers
 mingling but to woo him :
 Orpheus comes from the mountain, singing :—

‘ Hear me, and come to me,

for I am singing.

Hear me, great mountains and all gracious hills.

Hear me, coming to me ;

it is my breath that fills

your spacious song. O come when Orpheus sings !

You were my home to me

for all my long abiding.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet

of him who brings

good tidings !’

Till Orpheus sings
far from the night of song returning,
song is mute ;
and the summer sunlight burning
listens through the silent hours
all day long ; until
trill of the linnet's song—
woo him !—woo him !—
flutes his coming from the hill.
Just the passing of a lute
breathing spring :—
who knew him ? who knew him ?—
Moving through the mist of flowers,
shadowed in a fire of wings,
Orpheus comes from the mountain, singing :—

‘ Hear me, and turn to me,
for I am singing.

Hear me, bright waters and all glowing springs.

Hear me, turning to me ;
 mine is the lute that sings
your summer flow ; for I am waves and song.
Hear me, returning with me,
 music no longer hiding.
The waters singing for my silent loneliness
 seemed but one long
sweet chiding.

Hear me, and sing to me,
 for I am singing.
Hear me, all children and all hearts of song.
Hear me, singing to me ;
 for I am joy, and strong
within your heart ; for I am love, and singing.
Hear me, clinging to me,
 love am I, and abiding.
Hearken and sing to me, all love, for I am song
 returned, and bringing
glad tidings.'

CAGED

The air, the water, and the sun
are all the lesson children need ;
light limbs were made to romp and run,
grow supple with the wind of speed ;
unruly hands to clap and swing
 like anything,
 and starry eyes
to follow birds across the skies.

Poor mites ; you stiffen on a bench
and stoop your curls to dusty laws ;
your petal fingers curve and clench
in slavery to parchment saws ;
you suit your hearts to sallow faces
 in sullen places :
 but no pen
nor pedantry can make you men.

Yours are the morning and the day ;
you should be taught of wind and light ;
your learning should be born of play,
the questioning of quickened sight ;
the unfolding of sun-sweetened flowers
 should fill your hours,
 ere the shell
shrivels about man's wintry cell.

For you the moorland psalms are sung ;
your laughter chases with the leaf ;
the river-ripple tunes your tongue ;
quick rain waits comrade on your grief ;
the make-believe of moonlit skies
 will make you wise,
 and only youth
can find a playfellow in truth :

There is no virtue in grey lore,
only the half-forgotten things
that children dreamed, and tried to store
with pens made from their fallen wings.
Thrust them on life through no dead past :
 head high, hand fast,
 by wood and wild
we make the man, and keep the child.

PIXY POOL

Pixy pool's in Brownny ghyll,
over ample Ullathorn ;
where the crags of Crinkle hill
meet the upshoot of the morn ;
and a shrug of mountain shoulder,
mossed with drip from brake and boulder,
marsh with mist-dew from the hags,
flings a lash of torrent sweeping ;
storm and laughter,
twofold light in twofold leaping
down the bent of rifted crags ;
shrill awhile, and after
still awhile, and sleeping
where within the rock-hewn shade
under ash and arching fern
midway poised on the cascade
Ulla slung the elfin churn.

Deep beyond the day's discerning
rings the circle of the pool,
slowly, whisperingly turning
bubble-grained and cavern-cool
round the hollow hush of wall ;
till the surge of foam and drip
brims upon the lower lip,
and a shallow film of light,
wash of pearl and silver spin,
ripples down the further fall ;—
dream-breath of the water sprite,
Ulla, Ulla sleeps within.

Once in every day of spring,
at the dew-dance of the lark,
down the shadowed stream
steals a sunrise gleam,
curiously wakening
sudden dimples through the dark.

Then from hidden shades beneath
break the stars of sleeping breath,
and a ruckling of loose stone
jars the fall's smooth undertone :
secret eddies spurt and glimmer,
wavering with white of limb,
and the bronze strength of the swimmer
pauses startled on the rim ;—
till the gleam dies up the hill,
and the tremulous depths grow still.

In the evening darkening,
when the silence of the hill
daunts the voices of the dale,
tarn and streamlet glistening,
luminous and listening,
watch the choir of stars unveil,
hear the song of moonlight fill
all the night's lone hearkening.—
Then the trolls of pike and crest,
heather-folk and elfin throng,

toss the melody of rest,
moonlit dreams in ebb and flow,
to and fro, to and fro,
over glen and mountain breast ;
and a single star of song
darts upon the pool of sleep,
quivers and breaks
exquisite and falling,
with a keen and radiant calling,
on the shadow in the deep.

Deep within the Pixy pool
bubble-grained and cavern-cool,
Ulla laughs, and Ulla wakes !

Hark, the caldron churns and quakes ;
echoes babble up the ferns ;
wide and white the water burns
o'er the pallor of a face,
haunting eyes of chrysoprase,
rising in the liquid dome ;
higher, higher, bubble-bright,

break of breast and arm alight
burst from out the troubled foam ;
merriment, by moonlight kissed,
mermaid fashioned of the mist,
swinging, swinging,
with a rail of laughter ringing,
Ulla cries the midnight tryst !

Wild she swings her moss-green hair
web-like up the rocky stair,
all the length of dull green coils
clinging, clinging
film and wet to rib and scar ;
till the prisoned ripples playing,
petulantly white a-quiver,
set the silken streamers swaying,
and a plash of angry river
sparkles down the sullen toils ;
flinging, flinging
murk of green to aspen silver in the windlight of
a star.

Near and far, ringing, ringing,
Ulla-laughter thin and shrill
runs in echo up the rocks,
where the gnome upon the hill
wakes and wags his grizzled locks :—
How he cracks his grey old throat,
flutters with his lichen coat,
up and up in twirl and skip
clutching at the echo drip ;
and his jig of creaking joints
spins about the jagged points
with a clack of shrivelled bones
on the gritty shifting stones.

Pool a-babble, crag a-croak :—
Ha ! but they're alive, these folk !

THE BONES IN THE LONG-BARROW

Is it your birth-dance, brother of white fire burning ?

Is it your death-song, brother of red-charred tree ?

There is a stir of flame and dance returning
through the brown body of me.

Am I alive, yet cannot feel ye flitting,

brothers of heat, in rush of tongue and spark ?

Was that rough of my bones, flesh-bare and gritting,
as I turned in the dark ?

Was there not hair that wrapped me, red and swaying
harsh on the huddled knees that flamed a-ring,

where we crouched and rocked to the white gusts
playing
through your red rioting ?

Had I not eyes that flashed to watch ye leaping,
seared, and red, and glad of your stabbing light :
eyes that shunned the devil shadows creeping
close through the hidden night ?

Shadows, shadows of dusk ! swift in pursuing,
soon as the sun-lord slept and his shrine burned grey,
hemming our fearful watch, till his might renewing
sucked them in shreds of day !

Shadowy throng in the forest ! ever they sought me
when as a boy I sped on the lowland chase ;
ha ! how I dared the dark that all but caught me,
leaped for the bare green space.

When in the drought I drove the flocks from drinking
up the white chalk scarp from the hollow of dew,
grey wolf shadows, I knew them, sly and shrinking,
peering from thorn and yew :

shadows of summer stealth, alert and cunning,
 lapping the cliff that ringed the herds below ;
 shadows to flee, in their gaunt and savage running
 o'er wintry downs of snow :

shadow-voices of night, of winds assailing,
 stilled to a shuffle of feet that crept and crept ;
 shuddering hungry death when the flame-god failing
 hissed that his servant slept.

Darkness, and dread, and only shadowy thinking.
 Sure was the night, but would the daybreak tire ?
 Heap our brother the wood-sap for his drinking !
 Rouse the red dream of fire !

Shadows of men to fight ! They sought us, shrilling
 hoarse attack from the vale of marsh and flood ;
 fierce the lust of the heavy hand and the killing,
 the lanchards sodden with blood.

Blood on the sun-blink stone at day's unsealing
held thee, brother of light, for my hunting hours.
Blood on the night stone pledged ye to my shieling,
brothers of dew and showers.

Am I not lord of the dene and the valley waters ?
Son of the thong-ringed axe and the shapen stone ?
These I slew, and the sons of their mist-haired
daughters
are hill-born, and mine own.

Grey stones of life I raised in countless number,
barring with woven gloom the shadow raid.
High I heaped my hill of moonlit slumber,
mocking death's master-shade.

Did I but dream that the long grey shadows spied me,
crushed my strength, shrunken and old for flight,
far on the hollow down, with none beside me,
lonely for my last night ?

Have I not dreamed a sound of summers sowing
sod on sod o'er my cyst of secret stones ?

Have I not dreamed a frost of winters throwing
dust through my whitening bones ?

These are the herds, my sons, for ever crying
summons to unseen flocks along my hills :
the changeless mutter of hidden watchmen plying
the handstones in my mills.

'Tis but a night of winds, and shadows fleeting,
of dry chalk whispering at the sip of rain.

The downs still keep fire and the dawn from meeting ;
and I may sleep again.

THE MUSIC OF SPACE

Come to thee, that will I ;
some night of a wet moon and sobbing wind
haunted with movement of returning mist ;
when there is neither sea, nor rain, nor sky,
and all the faces of the waves are blind
with wrinkles of white laughter, sorrow-kissed
to a wide fall of tears ; tears, but no weeping,
as of a child's eyes closed and innocent
of any passing pain ;
laughter, as of a child's lips curved in sleeping
to changing fashions of unfelt content,
passionless as the pulse of wind and rain.

Then will I come to thee,
that singest in the ripple of still rain
running from seaward on my window-pane.

Come to thee, that will I ;
in a grey twilight, mutinous and strange,
when the tides fill, and whisper, and forget.
But first I know my human heart must die,—
and O, I would not lose my heart as yet !
for there is warmth within my world, and change
from passion to grave work and sunny dreaming ;
the hands of wounded friends reach out for mine ;
and there are hopes to tend.
But where thou singest strange new shores are
gleaming
from ice of hidden seas, in cold star-shine,
that know not love nor laughter, thought nor friend :
And should I come to thee,
it must be as a shadow life that lies
between dead earth and thine auroral eyes.

Come to thee, that must I :
Music thou art, too mutable for pain,
infinite, yet too dreamlike for desire ;
thy song is mirthless as the moonlit sky,
chill with the silver laughter of sea rain,
wistful as space, unsearchable as fire.
It is thy siren-spirit thou art singing,
born of the iron rock, the wayward sea,
on some lost spell of sand ;
and I must yield to thee, alone and bringing
nor hope, nor heart, nor any memory,
my soul a harp of mist, tuned to thy hand.

Yet will I come to thee,
and be thy silence, and thy sound that fills
great waters and grey wastes and sunless hills.

A ROCK CALLED LE PÈRE ÉTERNEL

Incomparable rock ; the thought that framed
these mountains fashioned to a single stone ;
brooding huge and alone
from a dark promontory of precipice,
projected on a moon of ordered spires
against the tumult of descending ice.
Some herdboy, watching by his brushwood fire
the shadow moving up the starlit range,
in a night vision named
its dim suggestion of a form divine :
figure, solitary and ultimate,
veiled till the slow discovery of change
reveals the mystery of things create,
the great designer in his own design.

THE LONELY PEAK

L'Isolée is a very lovely peak
looked at from every side,
veiled in sheer darkness for a summer week,
white-veined at winter tide ;
aloof on sombre walls, in wind and sleep,
she makes her lonely stand ;
the menace of hoarse glaciers from the deep
dies past on either hand.

'The lonely peak is mine, by the fair right
of conquest, by the stress
of long essayal, difficult delight,
and danger-won success ;
yet in the hour of mastery less mine,
one friendly hope withdrawn,
than when her virgin solitude of line
flamed heavenward to the dawn.

The lonely peak was mine, by the sure bond
of solitary things ;
she bears no beacon for great heights beyond
and droops no white snow-wings ;
no glacier riches pour from out her heart
to make the vales more green ;
her jealous sisters cluster close apart,
and let the night between.

Summit of lonely hope, in dreams and day
mate of my warring thought ;
the hand upheld to point my upward way
while Pisgah's fight was fought :
Alone for freedom, in the separate strife,
we were right friends before :—
the moment's union of our lonely life
has gained us nothing more.

THE CRAGSMAN

In this short span
between my finger-tips on the smooth edge
and these tense feet cramped to the crystal ledge
I hold the life of man.

Consciously I embrace
arched from the mountain rock on which I stand
to the firm limit of my lifted hand
the front of time and space :—

For what is there in all the world for me
but what I know and see ?

And what remains of all I see and know,
if I let go ?

With this full breath
bracing my sinews as I upward move
boldly reliant to the rift above
I measure life from death.

With each strong thrust
I feel all motion and all vital force
borne on my strength and hazarding their course
in my self-trust :—

There is no movement of what kind it be
but has its source in me ;
and should these muscles falter to release
motion itself must cease.

In these two eyes
that search the splendour of the earth, and seek
the sombre mysteries on plain and peak,
all vision wakes and dies.

With these my ears
that listen for the sound of lakes asleep
and love the larger rumour from the deep,
the eternal hears :—

For all of beauty that this life can give
lives only while I live ;
and with the light my hurried vision lends
all beauty ends.

MOUNTAIN SPEED

O the winter joy of the flying of feet over snow-
clad hill,
the rush and the snow-leap vieing with the flight of
our will ;
the hiss of our Ski, and the sighing of speed that frost
cannot still !

The race of the strong thrust urging the froth of the
turn,
the pace of the snow-blast purging with clean heart-
burn,
the face of the valley up-surfing to meet our sweep
of return !

O the sunshine glory of lying a' dream on the steep,
above restless forests defying their burden of sleep,
with the whisper of white worlds dying lulling our
 hearts from the deep !

As the swoop of the swift keen-shrilling in twilight
 of May,
as the stoop of the hawk to the killing from visionless
 grey,
as the plunge of the rainbow filling the haggard
 spaces of day :—

Like the pouring of glacier on ocean, in fiords
 of the sea,
like the flood of a people's devotion, in arms to
 be free,
is our soaring of passionate motion o'er mountains,
 the swirl of our Ski !

Though the way be up-hill and long winding, with
irksome sleet,
and a slabbery snowbroth binding our lift and beat,
there'll be day o'er the pass, and the blinding of wind,
and all heaven in our feet !

Spurn the crest fierce driven from falling fountain of
snow :

Earn the rest that is given to all whom the mountains
know :

Learn the best of all living from height, and the glory
of speed, and the glow !

GLOW-WORMS

In very evil temper, dog-tired,
we stumbled up the darkling stone path,
defeated, starved, and late,
resolute but for the goal ;
the flickering vital force alone fired
by a consuming hate
for all things visible, a smouldering wrath
each with the other's martyred self-control.

It was a very weary stern trudge,
when every angry footstep but brought
some turn of sullen mood,
movement itself no zest ;
the day's delight remembered but to grudge
fruitless endeavour ; and food,
food ruling it through all the realms of thought,
but thrall to rest, dreamless delicious rest.

Brooding heavily as I heavily trod,
it came to me—body is lord of mind
and prisons heart and nerve ;
even the soul seems less ;
nothing without, not even the limping god,
could in this temper serve
to banish hateful apathy, and unbind
laughter from grim and aching weariness.—

Close to the path, couched on the dead earth,
the dragon darkness lifted sudden lids
on two eyes glowing with green
vivid mystical light ;
clearing and clouding pools of still mirth,
soulless as stars, serene
with the unearthly joy in being that bids
moon-ruffled waves challenge a heedless night.

O anger, minister of spent frame,
O body, tyrant of the tired mind !
Arm now, you lords of sense,
fling beauty from the door !
Two tiny glow-worms, discs of dim flame,
sweep you, poor shadows, hence ;
and speed us laughing with the wind behind
new friends, new-hearted, up the hill once more.

SOLITUDE

I shall meet you once by day,
where you race the rush of foam
from the passing of the ships,
braid of samphire at your waist,
bronze of wind for naked pride,
pressing with impatient feet
shadowy circles up the sand :
I shall take them from your hand
fruits of ocean salt and sweet,
mermaid love and seaman woe,
danger quest and tempest home ;
bind a wreath of sun and spray ;
crush the froth against my lips ;
hold your secret fierce embraced :—
till the movements of the tide
surge about my heart, and flow
singing chill from throat to knee :—
 once by day
mine the vision of the sea !

I shall meet you once by night,
where the wintry wrath of wind
bends a mutiny of trees
black against the moonlit fall :
I shall feel the river flow,
shivering in the willow-root,
from the urgency of your arm :
I shall hear all silence call ;
join all darkness in pursuit ;
leave no loneliness unscanned :—
till I touch your welcoming hand,
kiss the warmth of rainbow light
from the frost-stars on your breast ;
catch you crying from the breeze ;
clasp your whiteness through the snow ;
and you yield your soul confessed,
all your song of woodland charm
sighing passion for my dream :—
 once by night
mine the sound of wood and stream !

I shall meet you once ere death,
in the brown and lonely spaces
where you ride the sands of storm
headlong at the angry sun :
I shall see the red light run
molten on each supple limb
down the aisles of desert places,
blazoning a burnished form
on the illusory glare :
dust of wandering on your hair,
evening answer in your face,
you will wait me on the rim
where the very deserts tire
startled into sudden ending :
I shall touch your throat of fire,
read the measure of all space
shadowed in your restless wings.
On the brow of time descending
when the level lights gleam low,
I shall know
all the joy of endless things !

VALUES

Time is too short to classify all feeling ;
Passion too vital to divide its rays ;
Thought brooks no filter for its free unsealing :
If we would live, there are but nights and days,—
 each brief, each excellent
 to speed some swift intent.

There may be leisure in a grave hereafter
for memory to sift each wind of change ;
label this moment virtue—for its laughter ;
evil that—for its suffering ; and arrange
 a balanced argument
 of all the spirit spent.

We have but life ; light instant and receding ;
blinding occasion, blending with the past.
Who halts to value every vital leading,
lives without living ; leaves it at the last,
a life of no event,—
but honourably meant.

FORM

Grant me to care for all the usual things ;
to grow ambition of a graceful kind ;
to hit round objects deftly, cheer for kings,
and make a placid mirror of my mind ;

to leave my soul behind,

while kind convention jerks my life on strings.

Give me good form ; to reverence or condone
all things established ; trim a temperate creed,
tolerant of all but trespass on mine own,
sanctioning excess where nice traditions exceed.

O make me bland in breed,
and my last breath a modulate undertone.

SCAFFOLDING

Framework and scaffold, they are built of dust
and bones, and all the litter of dead hives
 heaped up to hide our day ;
cells of paid service, wax of wasted lives,
their grim obscuring obelisks are thrust
 athwart the human way.

Each morn we climb to our appointed rung,
and spend our part in sunlight piously
 to prop some antic frame.

For worship we uplift an envious eye
where from some perch our puppet-god is swung,
 puffed by the prattle of fame.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

Bring your lamps ! Buy our lamps ! laddies, come
and buy them !

buy a pool of colour for the puddles at your feet ;
gold, green, and rose lamps, lassies, come and try them !
Join the feast of lanterns jogging through the street ;—
gay lights for day light, who can call us cheat ?

Red lamps for head lamps ! oil lamps of learning,
colouring the pavement and the dust heap red ;
buy them with youth, and your sun-dreams burning,
light the dead ashes with our rose lamps instead,—
ruddy in your honour when your white life is dead.

Art lamps for heart lamps ! conformity and duty,
blue on the kerbstones of privilege and class ;
barter your liberty, your flame-chase for beauty ;
bob with your unction in your blue lamp glass ;—
blue in your order processional pass !

Gold lamps for old lamps ! of riches and labour,
 yellow on the kennel and the mean street stones ;
 buy them with love and the lantern of your neighbour,
 they shall throw gilding and glitter on your bones ;—
 white lights may purchase cenotaphs and thrones !

Rainbows ! Buy rainbows ! the colours in due order,
 set in our system for a cheap social sign.

Child, learn the spectrum, and your own coloured
 border,

buy it with your spirit and your white sunshine ;—
 gold, green, and rose lamps, join our jigging line !

White lights, life lights, of free and restless living,
 blazing in the spaces of summer land and sky.

Colour lamps, duller lamps, hear what we are giving !
 bargains in rainbows, and moonshine by and by :—

School lamps for soul lamps ! Who'll buy ?
 Who'll buy ?

MORT-MAIN

Soil measures no dead merit ;
but the green world is carved in cantles
for those who wear not the mantles
of the prophets from whom they inherit
The purple we pass with the throne ;
the laurels rest Cæsar's alone.

Dust of the bone-white hand,
dead as its earning is dead,
litters our life-space, spread
over the fruits of our land.
Earth is our right, but the claim
is of our need, not our name.

Life has brought us to birth ;
equal our burden to live ;
life, for our birth-right, must give
a free son's portion of earth ;
a purpose and pleasure in living,
owing none thanks for the giving.

We have the right to bear
life ; and to ask for its worth
warmth, and the nurture of earth,
freedom for growth, and free air.
Life lived for livelihood
garners no guerdon of good.

Health is for man, for his toil ;
mind is mind for the race :
bind it to starveling space,
serf-life breeds in its soil,
chained, with its loan of soul,
to the chance of the dead man's dole.

Thralls of a senseless chain,
born without will to breath,
borne to unwitting death,
we live our labour in vain :—
bent backs and toil-dimmed eyes
glean no stars from the skies.

We have the right to mirth,
to leisure, and valiant place ;
the right of sons to the grace
and knowledge of joyous earth :—
work is a king's proud pleasure
where freedom orders its measure.

Life is the power to choose ;
man lives man by the choice :
free to serve, and rejoice ;
free to renounce, and lose
living itself in the strife
of freedom for coming life.

WASTE

Grub for gold with prisoned life ;
mint it at the price of breath ;
let it bear the stamp of strife ;
let it purchase power of death :—
Life and gold, one sweated bar,
lavish it on waste of war.

Dig the gold with good men's toil ;
leave the holes for dead men's graves ;
starve the growth, and hoard the spoil
stored in trenches, heaped on waves :—
Murder, lurking underground,
till the trump of Azrael sound.

Drain the gold, and forge the chain ;
drain the strength, and bind the race ;
rouse the brute in man to reign ;
train him for his princely place :—
Flunkey to a nation's pride
in the lust of fratricide.

THE LITTLE GREEN GOD

The lad may be toiling
 and foiling the lassie,
and work be the thought and the will ;
all learning be labour
to beggar one's neighbour,
all life be a clod
and bare with nought hidden ;—
 when over the hill
 of a sudden, unbidden,
comes leaping the little green god.

The day may be waking
 and breaking the dew-webs,
or lingering late on the pass ;
the man may be striving
at dawn for his living,
or checking the nod
of old age after noonday ;—
 when over the grass
 like the mist in a moonray
comes drifting the little green god.

All sunburnt, and scorning
 the warning of elders,
with the laughter of stars in his eyes ;
green-tunicked, keen-darted,
brown-haired, golden-hearted,
his little feet shod
with the wings of new loving,
 from far in the skies,
 to new melody moving,
comes tripping the little green god.

IN PRAISE OF DANCING

When the eye wearies of straight streets meeting,
wearies of the passing of low flat things,
all moving two ways, in narrowness retreating,
narrowly nearing, with senseless hurryings :

when the heart longs for the sweep of branches
 swinging
o'er the shaken reedbed by the brook side,
dreams of the north wind, and white gulls winging
slant to the cliff and the inrush of the tide :

crouched by the fire, I call them from the embers
the brown sails stooping under rushing skies,
all wayward curvings of hills the heart remembers,
the briar lanes crinking to corners of surprise :

Faint at the door sounds the music of her coming,
mute, but in movement with my heart beat,
hymning the silence, as the bee-hives humming
make summer music of the orchard heat.

Through the low archway but a shadow showing,
folded, a lily at sundown, she stands,
darkness in garlands of supplication flowing
from the white column of her lifted hands.

Cloud is she, and swaying ; the flame points quiver
rippling in wave-lights to the silken hems,
soft as the dancing of a dawnlit river
mirrored on the bending of green willow stems.

Languid her arms through woven mists declining
pour at her feet translucent fold on fold ;
her fall of tresses, loosened and untwining
wrap her in torrents of reluctant gold.

Moulded from shadow, the measure of her graces
is crescent and changing as cirrhus-girt moon ;
soundless her footfall that rhythmically paces
this way and that way to some still tune.

Music more rare than flute-notes of fair weather
bends to its breath the swaying of her form,
still as the undulance of rain-driven heather
in curvings of rest more constant than the storm.

Movement of the marshland ; where curlews are
 wheeling
in twilight circles of sorrow-laden flight,
mocking our human and desolate appealing
with alternate voices of loneliness and night.

Swift and more swiftly her tresses upflowing
waver and widen gold upon the gloom ;
waves as of wind on a summer lake glowing
round me, and o'er me, and all through the room.

Dance of the fleetness of Iacchus' daughters,
sought through the woodland of satyr and of faun,
luring the love chase by snow-brindled waters
with laughter of spring-light and child-light and
dawn.

Veiled are her limbs, under wavebreak shifting,
green with the sheath of reeds in summer wells;
dim through the ripples her lissom feet drifting
are pearl-bright and dazzled as deep-seen shells.

Dance of the mayfly, in the mellow season,
when evening is pensive with warm spent showers,
sinking and soaring in rapturous unreason,
mist on the brightness of sunstarred flowers.

Tendrils of jasmine, her white arms and slender
strive with the eddies, summoning sweet air
cool to her lips, to sink in faint surrender
through the fierce surging of red gold hair.

Dance of the frenzy of leaf forests, burning
at midnight, tossed on the melody of fire,
bartering fruit and their green spring's returning
for the instant of motion and masterless desire.

Movement of time ; a broad and murmuring ocean
beats on my heart to the falling of tears ;
all my soul throbs to the passion of motion,
the heartbeat of life in the passing of the years.

Movement in birth ; and measureless the seeing
back through the chaos of life unborn,
where the worlds wait in vapour of new being
the order of time and summons to their morn.

Movement in death ; long ages of to-morrow
lag with her failing feet, and all of me
dies in a void of night and voiceless sorrow
where the last wave dies from the last dead sea.

Stillness, and night, and harsh embers falling :
 dead with the dance the dreamland of her feet :
 alone in darkness new weariness recalling
 the narrow passing and straightness of the street.

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Rhythm of Dancing, first-born of emotion,
 when the world reasoned not and its limbs were light ;
 symbol of union, offered in devotion
 by our brief cadence to an infinite ;—

rapture of movement, mystical possession,
 the wingmate of worship, but passionately free ;
 all beauty dreamed of, and found not in expression,
 is living, and ordered to utterance, in thee.

IN THE HEART.

There is a well of water hidden deep
within the heart, too deep for drought of fears ;
the winds of joy speed past it, and its sleep
frets with no rain of tears.

But at one voice
the depths are opened, and the giant springs
burst from the riven ground :

The heart sings.

The flooded rivers and the falls rejoice
with glorious echoes, shouting to be free ;—
and life seems one glad sound
of waters moving on an infinite sea

There is a furnace of unkindled fire
hidden beneath the heart's smouldering unrest ;
it lightens with no flaming of desire ;
the torch of friendship leaves it unconfessed.

But at one glance
the clouds illumine, and the earth is crowned
with jets of burning rays :

Love is found.

Fire and the stars leap in exultant dance
of passionate splendour, welling to the height ;—
and life grows one great blaze
of altars kindled upon hills of light.

IN THE HOPE.

Through many lands I sought my heart's delight,
up broken glacier and o'er tedious plain ;
I stormed the fastness of untrodden height,
and made boon comrades of the clouds and rain ;—
but ever love in flight
left me to follow down the years in vain.

I have found comfort in the cold of seas,
and friendship in the rushing of the wind ;
the starlit couch has brought me breath of ease,
the forest silence taught my rebel mind ;—
but still true love's heart's-ease
left me most lonely of all human kind.

Last night I watched the foam-drift on the sand,
searching the breakers for their transient gleam ;
and lo, love laughed beside me from the land,
more exquisite, more radiant than my dream ;—
 and upon either hand
the great cliffs gladdened in the last sunbeam.

Spirit of beauty and delightful thought,
with the fair truth of morning in your face,
life may withhold the treasure that I sought,
but I have seen its lovely hiding-place :—

 Joy for all time you brought,
for I have walked with love a little space.

IN THE PRESENCE.

The Princess slept within the fairy ring,
more radiant than its flowers ;
through the long dreaming hours
Love lulled her with a vision of love's king ;—
dear sleeping child,
was he so rare a playmate, that you smiled ?

The Princess stirred within the enchanted brake,
a little tired of sleep ;
Love of its purpose deep,
sent sylvan Caliban to bid her wake ;—
huge monstrous thing,
Love must be blind to choose so strange a king.

The Princess woke, wide-gazing at the day ;
 under the whitethorn wood,
 she saw him where he stood,
and frowned to find her prince such common clay ;—
 what heart could grant him
the love-kiss that alone may dis-enchant him ?

The Magic Beast fled from the sunny glade,
 half glad to have been near,
 and half in selfless fear
his love might cast on her some passing shade ;—
 so hid his shame,
to let her slumber till the true Prince came.

Some stories say he had a happier fate ;
 and tell of beauty's love
 transforming him, to prove
that love can make the meanest mortal great ;—
 but are they true ?
O queen of love, the answer rests with you !

IN THE MEMORY.

I do not seek for sunshine or for flowers
to make a summer setting for my love ;
passion that asks soft lamps and scented hours
to serve its constancy, has yet to prove
 love needs no ritual sign,
 itself fire and shrine.

I'll serve my love behind no sheltering doors,
but set it for a signal in great space,
where the gales riot over northern moors,
roaring the embers to red sparks a-chase,
 and sleet and gusty rain
 drench the white brands in vain.

I'll raise my love a beacon by the bar,
lashed by the waves and salt with cleansing foam ;
the nights of frost shall clear it to a star
to guide the ships of happier comrades home :—
 its wheel of hope may bring
 light for one home-coming.

MOLE-HILL

Lad of white face,
soft stomach, rounding shoulders ; in the ruck
of restaurant loiterers ;—you are in the cage !
—the cheat of city moles
that spins through luncheon hours and sunday trips,
shop-lamps and penny-luck,
from betting boyhood to suburban age.
Morning and night you creep
with shadow swarms under the paving stone
from cells of sunless work to stifled sleep.
You tunnel feverishly round and round :—
whether you spin or shirk,
the world without revolves between its poles.
This is the wonder of the wheel of work !

Peaked city lad,
will this be all you had
when you escape in earnest under ground ?
There are chinks in the cage ;
even the prison mole must make his mound !
You see the sun : the glimpse of a red flare
through chimney-bars on narrow skies.
You feel the wind : a dissipated Puck
who lurks round corners to fill angry eyes
with germ-grit and stale air.
You claim for wage
enough for loneliness : for noisy leisure
a show of moving shadows like your own :
you rest on racing papers,
cheap cigarettes to suck,
and your own hobbled capers.
Love lends you in mean measure
the lure of a sad face and froward stare.—
This is the wonder of the wheel of pleasure !

SHEPHERD'S WEAL

A good hill, shepherd, and great good heat,
with a pond and shieling near us ;
the good green grass to cool our feet,
and a friendly flock to cheer us.
'The spring might pass, and the whitethorn blow,
the cuckoo shout and we not know ;
and what at dusk should we have to show
for a song half sung in a sunless street,
with never a hill to hear us ?

Under the trees,
oaks of spring comeliness, but bearing still
the scolding of their brown leaves, loose in the wind,
the old herd limped, stiff-jointed through his smock,

shouldered his stick, and pointed
 with a dull nod,
 to the long breathlessness of plain behind.—

Immoveable, and curved like the great hill,
 a shepherd god
 waited the while submissive under an oak,
 his jealous dogs ringing his bare brown knees
 from his importunate flock.—

“ That’s life, that is, down there !
 gentry, and riches, and me bidding folk
 do as they’re used to bid
 me ! and me in my carriage, and don’t care !
 and I’ve a son down there ; my son ; fine stuff !
 he took his chance, he did ;
 learned everything ; and comes up once in a while
 with a city wife and a kid
 good as a lady, and his !
 she don’t speak like us ; finds naught good enough :
 he’s the real thing, he is !

Ah, you should see his ways, and his gentry smile
for our low neighbours ! Such a fun
he makes of his brother. Though he had his chance
too ! I beat him to school ; set cruel about him ;—
but away the looney ran
each lambing time, and hid
up on the home-downs in a shepherd's van :—
said that the lambs could never come without him,
said that, he did !
a mean spirit, and low : but had his chance.
Now he'll do naught but dance,
and play for the sheep, and tend them !—
the beasts are crazy for him too, God mend them !
loonies all, I say !—
fares common like us, looks after the old wife
to please himself ; just grows, and sings all day,
sings for himself ! And says, says he, that's ' life ' !—
That one !
Ah, but the other,—
he's my fine son !
he'll be schoolmaster soon, in his own school !

“ Is that the wisehead’s brother ? ”
and as I raised my arm, and spoke,
Pan, startled, melted in the shade of the oak.
“ Aye, that’s the fool.”

A goodly hill, and a great good heat,
with a pen and feeding near us ;
the good green grass for a shepherd’s seat,
and a song with the flock to hear us.
The birds may shout, and the spring pass by,
and the great sun laugh from a friendly sky ;—
but what do we know, if you and I
are not on the downs at dawn to greet
the strong life sent to cheer us ?

DAYBREAK

Dark, dark are the mountains, and cold ;
the wind whips thinly through the grass
 soaked with recurrent storm ;
morning lurks pale behind the pass,
timid of darkness : night is old,
 and every keen hill form
fades in a murk of shifting grey.
Dawn ? dawn is dying afar
 ere the sullen sun will wake ;
and the track of a lost and witless star
titters in mockery of day
 from the broken lift of the lake.

The streets are sodden, dank with slime ;
a hissing of insistent rain
 slants through the lagging hours ;
fog blurs the lamps, an orange stain
on shivering pavement ; even time
 is stagnant, and slow showers
of midnight thicken dusk to dark.

Dawn ! is that dawn ? The haggard steals
bleakly behind the dray
that creaks on wet reluctant wheels,
jolting its melancholy spark
to the task of sunless day.

Morning mist by the mill-pool side,
where the eddies tussle the stiff brown reeds,
and warblers pipe from the sedges.
Sun !—and the race of village pride,
with splashing in honour of him who leads
our leap from the moss-green edges
wet with dew and the sputtering fall.—
Meadow morn ; and the day sped fair
when the earliest sunbeams quiver
on the curve of bodies ruddy and bare,
the ringing plunge and the reckless call
of laughing boys by the river.

THE STRONG SOUTH WEST

I have it, I have it, the lilt of the strong south west,
 the scud and smack of the squall on the lake in
 the cwm.

It is fresh from the fluttered moss on the rocks of
 the crest,
 cold from the wet dark ling and the wet gold broom :
 Clear and bitter with rain the good gust sings,
 comes to me, comes to me, singing of far clean things.

There is sight, keen sight in the sound of it, wavering
 lines

puffed on feathers of wind over stubborn heath ;
 huddle of gorse, and the shadow of slow grave pines
 jerked to an impish dance by the scour beneath :—

Flurry and flaunt of the goodly green and brown
bring me, bring me dreams from the windy down.

Breath, rare breath, from the smell of coarse crushed
grass
bravely swung to the shatter of storm and sleet ;
strength, rude strength, from the downward sweep
of the pass,
the linking hands of hills that lift my feet
high on the shoulder of cloud and restless sight,
close, close to the heart of cleanly height.

Call to me, call to me, over the sombre town,
corner-gust from the crooked jealous view ;
shout the cold of the cliff and the racing down,
stab with the fearless youth that once I knew :
Bring me wings from the hills, for wider rest,
speed, speed and song of the strong south west !

MOTION

Live life at the full ;
blend dream with the deed ;
drink deep of the draught.
The men who moved before us,
the mountain maids who bore us,
dared the roar of the pool,
raced from the hills of speed,
hunted the winds, and laughed
as they drove their sea-freight home
slant to the fall of foam.

Rude quarries of men,
with bronze boys for their brood
beechmast rugged and brown ;
rain was the smith that wrought them,
hunger the god that taught them
to harry fear from the fen,
burn the wolf from the wood,
fence the fold of the down ;
with flame for lover at night
by the bracken lair on the height.

Sun and passion and song
 set their feet for a fray,
 steeled their heart for a friend ;
 hope was the child beside them,
 death, but one dawn denied them :—
 ere they ceased to be strong,
 ere they thought for the way,
 sweet and sudden the end.—

Greater we, in a street
 brawling for creeds and meat !

Live life at the flood ;
 wrest joy from its storm ;
 sleep sound at the close :
 fierce in labour and pleasure,
 guard but honour for measure ;
 god, certain of good,
 light, shadowed in form,
 shade, flung to repose.

Life is motion, and splendid ;
 rest, and your part is ended.

BEACONS

There is a hill that stands for me
 beyond the sunset and the sea,—
 a ladder of light ascending :
 when I have crossed the evening ray
 and lost my comrade of white day,
 it beckons to me, bending
 a mountain-way of wind and rain
 to draw my feet from the dark plain :—

Where stars of slumber kindle on its crest,
 my hill, the high hill, from wandering to rest.

There is a hope that calls to me
 stronger than hills, than sun, than sea,—
 the fire of life still burning
 when I resign the light it lent
 and welcome darkness, well content ;
 leaving to life's discerning
 to lift my dreams on timeless wings
 and lose me with the dust of things :—

The borrowed gold searched from my passing breath,
 my hope, the high hope, to bear my dross to death.

AVALANCHE

You noticed him, the tall man on the kerb
seedily dressed, who stared up at the lamp ?
you thought he seemed to know me ?—we were
friends,
close friends, comrades in boyhood on the hills.
And yet we passed in silence ?—well, maybe
he wanted nothing ; maybe we have given
all he would ask from us—to pass unknown.
A cripple—ah, you had not noticed that ?
an accident, an avalanche of ice
in his first season. He had climbed with me
for many summers on our own sea-cliffs,
nursing the passion for more perilous heights :
a perfect comrade, sensitive and swift
in jest or sympathy, gallant of heart.

sure-footed as a fawn ; but with it all
a dreamer, poet,—call it what you will ;—
one who would watch changes of light and form
until their consciousness grew his, his mind
a mirror for their movement.

So it came ;
the great Alps moved in mockery of his dreams
laughed with a sunrise for his stolen strength,
and left him—memory.

At midnight we had left the chill pretence
of slumber by the ashes of old fires,
toiled up the looseness of moraine and snow
with drowsy patience, and in darkness crossed
the glacier-fall. The lantern-flare in front,
chasing broad shadows up the uneven ice,
paled to a sickly point ; and our two guides
halted to wait the coming of the sun
for the day's enterprise. Close to our hands
the abrupt cliffs rose steeply in a ridge
of easy prominence ; and all intent

to meet the opening dawn, we two alone
started to climb, following the broken crags
of customary ascent. At no great height,
some few score feet above our halting-place,
the rock rib ended, and a wall of ice,
bossed with the wet blue glimmer of past steps,
offered steep passage. Glad of heart to feel
the swing and the quiver of the axe new shaping
its stairway of clear ice, I quickly crossed.
Then in the splinters flickering from each blow
the eyes of dawn unclosed ; from the red sky
I saw the shafts of sunrise fall and kindle
on the white altars of the distant peaks,
and the clouds burn in worship to the morn.

I turned to watch my friend, for I had missed
the friendly clatter of his following axe ;
half-way across he stood, spell-bound and gazing
upward along the slope. Above our heads
the ice-wall swept in ever steepening lines
against the lighter sky ; until it ended

in a frail arch of snow flaked with grey lids
and sombre icicles, like monstrous jaws
curving to close. Even as I looked the depths
flashed into cruel life, as morning touched
their treacherous sleep. The huge crest seemed to
strain

upward and outward, stretching its slow coils
as of a serpent, poised and smoothly swaying,
bending, bending, to strike.

In vain I called ;
mute, motionless he stood, caught by the spell
of some fantastic vision ;—

—and it fell.

Why then ? why then ? of all the moving hours
of lonely sunlight when it should have crushed
naught but its echo. Why on him ? on him ?
of all the multitude of men who passed
and jested at its beauty.

With a sob
soft as of rending silk, and rather felt
than heard, the coronet of flaming snow

died from the sky ; drifting and frothed with light,
spinning in silver ripples like thin mist,
rising in billows on the resisting wind,
alive with malice and an evil mirth,
swift as its hate it swept upon our dark ;
furtive in the first distance, with a hiss
shrill and insistent, filling all the hills
with whispered warnings ; soon with gathering speed
purring in vibrant passion, till the rocks
pulsed with the murmur, and a hollow roar
rolling in hoarse repulse from crag to crag
burst in short thunder, as the avalanche
shattered upon the glacier's riven face,
and moaned to silence in the soft crushed snow.

Only a moment ere I reached his side ;
only a moment : but between us lay
the shroud of change, the strangeness of new sight,
that leaves the eyes of men betwixt whose hearts
the shadow of the veil of death has passed
looking as upon lives unknown, apart.

He did not seem to see me, and his eyes
were only for the sun, now broad with gold
above the welcoming peaks. And when he spoke,
thrusting his hand into the fallen snow,
he murmured twice,—“there was no life in it :
no life in it.” Naught of his suffering,
naught of himself. It seemed as if the sense
of his own pain was lost in the grim truth
that all the morning splendour of the hills
was but a lifeless mass, reared by dull chance
and flung to ruin in a heedless change.

And then ? Ah well ;—the usual commonplace
of ill-recovery ; the hurried talk,
condolence, question, following the rush
of new event to new forgetfulness ;
the flatness of return ; the hands of friends
reaching to grasp those that can lead the ranks,
but helpless for the laggard and for him.

You saw him there idling upon the kerb,
the man whose eyes were dazzled by one dawn

among the mountains, puzzling out his dreams
in the cheap flaring of the yellow lamp.

Now for your remedy : for a crippled strength ?

No, only a broken heart : —money ?—advice ?

he is but starved of hope, cheated by life :

—forgiveness ?—for a dream ? charity ?—for a
chance ?

He can wish naught from us who stand unseeing
midway between the height that drew his heart,
the depth that holds his name. His youth, his hope,
he gave them for his dream. And for his dream
may claim them from the might that shaped his soul :
but not from those that dream not ; not from men.

A BEE'S WAY

Bees know the way of things,
round again and up again and over,
making such a business of the hive,
waking such a burling in the clover ;
honey-bees, hive-bees,
humming in the lime-trees
humble-bee, hermit-bee, dumbledore and rover
honey-drive, honey-drive,
sweet scent and sun alive,
tumble through the meadow when summer plays
drover.

Round again, round again,
pride-gold and play of wings,
buttercups brimming, and the sun splashed over :

Big bees booming
what the little bees say of things,
drones humdrumming about Queens for their wives,
honey-bees fuming!—Ah, bees know the way of
things !
waking such a burly in the hives,
making such a business of the clover.
Honey-drive, money-drive,—
hum go the playthings,
drone-man, lonely-man, humbug and rover ;
money lives, sunny lives,—
lo ! men go the way of things,
up again and round again, and down—and all is over !

MOON SHADOWS

Is it—is it—
is it—a song ?
is it—a song ? is it—a song ?—
under the window at night in June,
lilt of the shadow of moonlit hours
chasing the twinkle of stars.

Is it—a song, a song ?—
a flicker of silver linking bars,
and silences,
will o' the wisp, alight and along
the linking shadow of trees.

Is it—is it—a song ?—
a slumbering breath of honey-bees
in and out of their thoughts of flowers :

is it the breathing of night
 sighing faint for the moonlight hours,
 summer scents in a dancing mist
 over a garden of June ?

Breath, and mist,
 breath, and mist,
 throbbing question, and still surprise,
 under the window at night in June :
 is it the music of light ?—
 the sparkle of song in children's eyes,
 from lashes kissed
 blinking trespass back to the moon :
 is it the beat of the heart,
 the heart of light in a lover's dreams ?—
 Is it a song, the song in the heart
 of moon beams ?

TIME AND TIDE

For wizards under ten
it is all there then,
the magic, and the marvels, and the fairy minstrelsy,
in the stretch of brown sand by the murmur of the sea.
From nowhere to nowhere it winds with no end,
the long long street without a name,
where dreamland and fairyland and childland meet,
and the centuries seem all the same ;
where Alice and Ariel and Roland range,
and Moses greets Merlin and Milton as a friend,
and there's always something strange
happening just round the corner, when no one is by,
at the bend, where the breakers and the rocks and
the sky
put their noses together
and whisper how they wish they could play without
the weather !

The vista of the sand
is the child's free land ;
where the grown-ups seem half afraid ;
even nurse forgets to sniff
and to call ' come here,'
as she sits very near
to the far up cliff,
and you venture alone with your spade
to dig down the dungeon of the Bluebeard princess,
where Sister Anne flutters her seaweed of distress,
and the big Dragons bellow from the caves
close at hand ;
and nearer and nearer the rescue of the waves
with the thousand thousand brothers of the green
armoured knight
on coursers loose-reined, and foam-streaked, and white,
come spurring, a-spurring up the sand !

On the ripples of the sand
there are fortresses unplanned,

which no man has time to begin :
for while he's still a-dreaming,
and his fancy hardly steady,
the walls are built and ready,
and the banners all a-streaming,
with bastion and glacis and barbican complete,
and the drawbridge is down, and the foe is in retreat,
and there's revelry and banqueting within !
Before the tide can reach
to the margin of the moat
or the bridge you are bothered how to build,
a shrill bugle note
sounds from far along the beach,
and the whole world is filled
with the tents of fairy squadrons and the clang of
martial din ;
as pages in purple brocades
ride singing to the viol under minarets and palaces,
sipping rose-coloured sugar from chased silver chalices,
and tilting through crystal arcades.

And you've hardly settled down
to sketch out the Moslem town,
when there comes a sound of singing from the sea,
and a silver-masted boat grounds softly on the shore,
with Jason and Nelson and Drake, and all a troop
of Vikings and Prince Rupert in pavilions on the poop ;
and with demoiselles a score
on their palfreys on the deck
pacing proudly to and fro,
with their tresses salt-encrusted,
but the armour quite unruined,
and the swords without a speck,
though the stormy winds did blow !—
And above them just one more
king of all that hero band,
always smiling, always gazing ;
he who holds the wizard's wand
any moment to set mazing
every wanderer of his kind ;
in whose very name the wind
woos the sea ; our own Ulysses !—

just a boy like you and me,
who detested ladies' kisses,
loved the sand and waves and sun,
wrecks and witches just for fun,
and made a game, and sometimes worse,
of everybody but his—nurse !

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Artificers over twelve
stand a little bit aloof
with a certain tolerant air,
and turn from the windings of the beach.
They are craftsmen, who can delve
manfully, with hand well-skilled,
deft to fashion, firm to build ;
but they seek a solid proof,
such as castle walls can teach,
that Malory and Mandeville and Homer are there
on the broad brown sands, in the singing salted air.

Then with deep and anxious frown,
pondering on every line,
they complete a great design ;
and machicolated keep or a mediaeval town
make it plain to older people,
so invariably stupid,
that this is the very steeple
where Munchausen tied his horse on that fatal day
of snow
thirty centuries ago ;
here Horatius held the bridge, here it broke ;
this Leonidas' ridge, and the hiding-place of Cupid,
and the Grotto where the Seven Sleepers slept ;
these the very walls of Troy, with the real and
actual hole ;
this the trunk of Charles' Oak,
and the gate that Turpin leapt,
and the maze-encircled tower where Fair Rosamund
quaffed the bowl.
But they hardly heed the sea, once they're over
twelve, and more,

or the widening and the lessening of the sand ;
for they fear no nurse's power,
and their little tidal hour
brings but freedom to fashion with the hand ;
but never a new vision of the wayward fairy folk
who chatter in the sand-drift, and dance the surf
to smoke,
and fill all the castles of the shore.
In history the dreaming of the sand goes on,
but half of the mystery of childhood is gone.

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Twenty, and more ;
there's no more magic in the sand.
The margin reaches
measurable, a narrow band,
between named capes and beaches ;
the cliffs are fringes for the fields ; the tide
moves only with the moon.

'Twenty, and more beside :—

we cannot dream our world, or build our dream ;
and we have lost the freedom of the shore.

Awhile our pleasure lingers
and joins the children, just to play at play ;—
the sand runs through our fingers :

With empty hand
we know we can no longer find the way
to the forgetfulness of what things seem.
The tide filled soon.

'There's sound of farther summons from free skies ;
the challenge of great crags along the coast ;
a foam of naked running for our feet
as the deep onset nears :

Sea ! and only the stars for watchful eyes ;
steepness of surf and sudden storm to meet ;
winds from no nursery clime
clamorous above the break and fall of years.

Spring tide at noon.

The sands return no more ;

the level way is lost

that wound just round the rocks to fairyland.

Full flood and broad,

fathomless over sand,

moves for a man the venture of the road

to vision realms that are not wrought in time,

that serve no tidal shore.

OLIVER'S MAN

[THEODORE MACAULAY TREVELYAN]

Great little Strongheart, dark, erect, aflame
with vital purpose, standing by the shore ;
behind, the wide still waters whence you came,
square-browed, square fronting to the world before.
The fairy seas of childhood kiss the sand
about your firm brown feet ;
their waves are in retreat,—
and yet you come no nearer up the strand.

You were made splendid for the great shore game,
to delve and fashion in the sands of toil ;
yours the deep thought, the fiery heart, that claim
life for a conquest, liberty for spoil :—
And yet you pause, listening open-eyed ;—
perhaps you hear the sea
calling you, child and free,
child to remain and wait no evening tide.

UNTO THIS

We who have watched the break of light and the
burnished mist on the mountain shoulder,
warm from our fold of frosted heath on the windy
heart of an open plain ;—
we who have swum the whispering fall when the
evening freshet runs brown and colder,
pressed our shadow of naked feet on the hurried
leaves of an autumn rain :—

we who have cherished the lamp of life in boyish
eyes and children's laughter,
held the jar to the press of love where the feet of the
dawn danced ruddy and strong,
we who have cleared the sun of dreams from the
cloud of witness shadowing after,
high on the courage of ancient hills, deep in the
colour of woodland song :—

we who have seen the red sword mount from the
 sunset sea to the dome of heaven,
 crouched from the night of glacial stars, parched
 under moons in the desert west,
 lived each beauty of earth reborn, till our morn and
 our evening numbered seven ;—
 we have reached our sabbath of years, yielded our
 hands to the chains of rest.

Wise with adventure, worn with time, in our prison
 bones of withered bleakness,
 limbs too frail for the manful trudge, blood too cold
 for the chill night's kiss,—
 others must bear our helpless age down the shortening
 valley of sheltered weakness ;
 we who have loved the motion of limbs, and the
 sweep of the wind, have come to this ! *

* George Meredith's last letter to Leslie Stephen.

Lone is our lamp of life, and dim, on the fall of a
darkness nearer stealing,

frozen deep our runnel of song, and all but mute in
its icy cage.

Still the heart, a failing star in the wintry night of
sunless feeling,

battles faint with the snow of years, the bitter thoughts
of our dying age.

Quick, an end to our broken watch ! Light we bring,
but the torch we borrow :

Loose us link-boys, battered and old, paid and
pleased that our task is done :

Leave the flame of our beacon years to light the hills
for another's morrow :

We have given our youth to light ! Snuff the candle,
and pass it on !

HYMN TO THE SUN

In the hour of deepest darkening, of night's strange
 ending,
life for a space lies hearkening, and alone.
Silence moves on the earth, in awe attending
some new labour of birth in light unknown.

Passing of sudden breath, of faint sighs shrinking
close on bent and heath, but soundless still :
darkness of graver mood on darkness sinking,
hollowing sombre wood and the dome of hill.

Broader spaces illumine, midway discovering
solemn shadows that storm in pursuit of night ;—
phantom shapes, in gloom released and hovering
till they cower to form at the menace of light.

Fire for the dawn to spin ; from heaven betraying
 web of the world-mist fraying with light within :
 flower and leaf, in array for the life beginning,
 whisper of colour for winning in service of day.

Light on the land-way glowing ; light on the meadow ;
 orient light upflowing on hills withdrawn ;
 ray on ray, red-riven from leash of the shadow,—
 hurtle the hunters of heaven in chase of the dawn.

At the flame that leaps white from the headland, runs
 flushed through the weald,
 at the stir of the soil deep-humming with growth new
 won,
 at the beat of the labourer's tread going forth to the
 field ;—
 we hail thy coming, thy coming, our father, the Sun !

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In the wonder of eyes that greet thee from opening
 flowers,
in the welcome of wind-song meeting thy music of
 showers,
in the worship of jocund fluting from gods on thy reed ;—
thy children of earth salute thee, returned to their need.

Thou wert not :—but still for our slumber thy watchmen
 keep
the frontiers of silence, and number the circles of
 sleep ;
through the arc of thine orb obscuring the deep tones
 swell,
in ordered challenge assuring ‘ all’s well, all’s well ! ’

For the nearer shelter of skies that the sunset sends,
for the moon-dream watch of thine eyes, and the stars thy
 friends,
for the comfort of sunrise breaking through midnight air ;—
we thank thee,—and hail thine awaking to live our prayer.

For the succour of rain, thy daughter, in life-giving
mist,

for the treasure of healing water thy noon has kissed,
for the greatness of seas rejoicing in tumult of rays,
for wind, and its passion of voices ; we give thee praise.

Thou art here !—and the glad lakes are shifting, full-
bosomed with flame,

the hands of the hills are uplifted and joined in thy
name,

the chorus of life in thine honour exults to the
height :—

the earth takes thy service upon her, and moves to
thy light.

Where the fall of the olives enfolds me, at morning I
stand ;

the caress of thy coming runs golden in light through
my hand ;

golden my feet in thy glory, and rhythmic in flow ;
the ore of my soul is molten and fused in thy glow.

Daybreak :—and still woods parting with tremulous
 smoke ;
the spurt of the well-wheel starting, the clang of the
 yoke ;
through the quiet of low-lit pasture the milker's
 horn :—
the contentment of life unmastered by labour at morn.

In the breath of the wet brown mould that the plough
 breaks new,
in the scent of the bluebells unfolding their sweetness
 of dew,
in the freshness of moorland still wreathed with the
 memory of mist ;—
is the kiss of thy children breathing the warmth of
 thy kiss.

In the fairing of oxen white-starred on the folds of
 the plain,
in the sleep of the children unguarding the ripeness
 of grain,

in the gleam running wide on the river from stooping
of wings ;—
is the heartbeat of sunshine, the giver of movement
to things.

Where the rosebud, the bride of the morrow, glows
red through the leaf,
where the bondman sows gold on the furrow, binds
gold in the sheaf,
where the burnish of rain breaks lower through rift in
the storm ;—
is the mirror of light, the bestower of radiance in form.

When the axes of woodmen are ringing on faggot
and root,
when the carts creak homeward bringing their
autumn of fruit,
when the voices of brown village maidens sing low
through the vine ;—
the forest, the fruit, and the cadence are sunlight, and
thine.

Fierce is the love of thy noon, and new life its desire ;
jealous in purpose the boon of its loosening fire ;
not for our sensuous mood, but for winter's hoard,
bubbles thy heat in our blood, stabs us thy sword.

In the shelter of hot dark cypress for the sultry hour,
I crouch by the cistern helpless to hide from thy
power.

The faint drops tremble, brimming on feverish stone:—
flame wells around and within me, its fountain
thine own.

Searching thy light, and cleaving our coolness of
plains ;
the parched soil opens, receiving thee deep in her
veins ;
the languor of water lies shieldless and wan on its
shore :
naked thy child, who yields thee his heart for thy
store.

In the winnow of wind-drift rending the withered
 from sown,
 in the gust of the wilderness blending sand and bone,
 in the vapour of marshes surging with vanishing
 death ;—
 the blast of thy spirit is purging the spaces of breath.

The glaciers sounding asunder in pitiless heat,
 the scorched crags rolling in thunder of fume from
 our feet,
 the throbbing of cave-springs coursing on unseen
 ways ;—
 echo thy furnace of forces, the forge of thy rays.

Thy zenith recks not of ruin, in ash and dead air ;
 of the crumbling precipice strewn with the dust of
 thy glare :
 In the solstice of drought and grey dearth, in the sap
 of dry thorn,
 thy flame is the source of new birth, is the verdure
 reborn.

In the droop of the purple grape from the sun-ribbed
 slope,
in the pool of the desert shaping its island of hope,
in the fruit of each falling blossom that floats on its
 dream ;—
the promise in earth's brown bosom breaks with one
 gleam.

In the frailty of bell-bloom waking through snow of
 white springs,
in the tremor of white petals shaken to mist of blue
 wings,
in the blue eyes of heaven burning on wastes of bleak
 stone ;—
the treasures of noon are returning, their purpose is
 known.

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Past is the passion of the king ; and the triumph
 receding

sweeps in stately evening up opening skies.

Broad from the dark-rimmed day the last lights
 leading

touch with late golden rays my watching eyes.

Shadow, sudden and deep, the heavens filling,

in solemn twilight chilling the plains asleep.

Darkness upon my hill, and clear stars sweeping
 upward through silence, keeping their frontier still.

On hushed ways passing, the last footsteps are dying ;

faintly the flute-notes whisper from musing reed ;

in the rustle of restless grass and forest sighing

echo lengthens the wistful earth's—'good-speed.'

* * *

Leave us, our life and sun, to rest from waking :—
all that our day has done, all joy was thine :
leave thy children to dream of new morn breaking :—
darkness shall be but seeming of thy sunshine.

In the hour of the sun's sinking, of day's still closing,
children for a while lie thinking, and at rest :
shadow on shadow deepening round the heart's
 reposing,
till silence folds them, sleeping, on earth's breast.



ENVOY

TO W. ARNOLD FORSTER.

A round stone trough below an olive tree
 silvering in first sunshine,
 and water splashing from the ivied stone,
 under a sky all blue ;
 a vista of red terrace, rimmed with vine ;
 hills, in a vanishing sea
 of sunlit fall and hollow, cypress-grown ;—
 this is the memory of my morning view,
 and you, Will, you.

The river, a clear crescent up dim skies ;
 the clouds, frail crescent flowers
 above the blue of morning dreamed again
 in mist of evening blue ;
 ivory almond-boughs haunting the hours,
 and stars, deep gentle eyes
 mirrored in star-lights from the deep still plain ;—
 this is the memory of my evening view,
 and you, Will, still you.

Monte Fiano, 1914.



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